



AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

GRADE LEVEL: 6-8

SUBJECT: Economics

NATIONAL STANDARD(S):
(6-8) ECO: 1.1-2, 3.1-7

THEME: Import/Export

FOOD AND FIBER TOPIC: IV-A,B,C,D

LEARNER OBJECTIVES:

The student will locate countries on a world map from which we import foods that our climate prevents us from growing locally.

VOCABULARY

broker—One that acts as an agent for others, as in negotiating contracts, purchases, or sales in return for a fee or commission

commerce —The buying, selling and trading of goods, especially on a large scale, as between cities or nations

export—To carry or send abroad to foreign countries as merchandise or commodities for trade or sale.

import —To bring or carry in from an outside source, especially to bring in (goods or materials) from a foreign country for trade or sale.

BACKGROUND

Have you ever had a craving for grapes in the middle of January? What did you do? The most logical solution is to pick up a bunch at the store. But where does your grocer get grapes in January? Grapes are a minor commodity in many states, but the grape harvest doesn't begin until mid-summer in the United States.

Grapes available in grocery stores in January are usually imported. They are grown and harvested in another country, sold to a large distribution company, or broker, shipped into our country, and sold to food supply warehouses. These warehouses, in turn, sell the grapes to your local grocery stores. Americans are accustomed to having their favorite foods available to them all year round. Importing seasonal products and produce fulfills this modern demand.

Grapes we buy during our winter months are usually imported from countries in the southern hemisphere. The southern hemisphere experiences summer during our winter months. Chile, a South American country, is one of the leading exporters of winter grapes to our country. Produce exported from South American countries is shipped on large cargo ships. When the produce arrives in the US, customs officials and agricultural inspection agents review the import papers and examine the goods for diseased produce, pesticide residues illegal in our country.

The imported grapes you bought in January fulfilled your craving, but you probably paid a high price for them. Imported goods cost more for a number of reasons, but the biggest factor is transportation. Weather is another factor. If the weather in those South American countries is favorable for growing grapes, there might be an overabundance of the produce grown. This is good news for you, because

it means the price might go down. On the other hand, if the weather is bad for grapes, the crop will be smaller, and prices will go up.

Governmental relationships between countries also affect the price of grapes. If the US government gets into an argument with the government of Chile, the two governments may break their trade agreements, and the import/export commerce will not exist until the political differences are settled. That may mean you have to do without grapes until the crops in California and Texas are ready.

Eating a wide variety of foods keeps us healthy and enriches our lives. Imported foods enable us to have many different foods at our fingertips through all the seasons.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring into the classroom items/products that cannot be grown locally because of climate restrictions in your area (kiwi fruit, figs, coffee, bananas, chocolate).
2. Ask your students where they can purchase these items. Review the term “import.” Have students use maps and reference materials to locate the origin of each item. (Some products may come from other states, and not other countries.)
3. Put together a list of prices for the items. Write all of the prices from the list on the chalkboard. As you hold up each item, challenge the students to match it with one of the prices listed on the board.
4. Have the students hypothesize about how the prices may reflect the origin and availability of the items.
5. Share background material.
6. Hand out student worksheets, and read through the directions. Provide world maps, with countries and boundaries marked, and map pencils. Have students complete the worksheets in groups of two or individually.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the term “export.” Divide students into groups of four. Give the groups five minutes to brainstorm agricultural products that would be exports from your state.
2. As a class, have students choose an item that cannot be grown in your state due to weather conditions. Use an encyclopedia to find where the item grows, and locate the area on a world map. Challenge students to monitor news reports for information about the area. Does the political climate create a change in the price? Does weather play a part in the price? Have students chart the price of the item over a month. After a month, ask the class to determine if the price has changed and draw conclusions. Are there local factors that might affect the price (competition between local grocery stores)?
3. Invite a grocer to class to talk about factors that determine what foods show up in the grocery store. Have students prepare questions ahead of time.
4. Have students look at home for three things that would be considered imports. Tell them to write the name of each item, its use, and the country where it originated.

RESOURCES

Student Books

Busenberg, B. (1995). Vanilla, Chocolate and Strawberry: The Story of Your Favorite Flavors. Lerner.

Golomb, K. (1996) Economics & You: Social Studies Activity Book. Mark Twain Media.

Johnson S. (1997) Tomatoes, Potatoes, Corn & Beans: How the Food of the America's Changed to World. Simon & Schuster.

Teacher Resources

America the Beautiful. Children's Press (Any state book from the series)

Celebrate the States. Benchmark (All of them have a product map for the state)

International Apple Institute, 6707 Old Dominion Road, McLean, VA 22101.

International Banana Association, 1101 Vermont Ave, NW, Ste. 306, Washington, DC 20005.

"The Spice Trading Game," McCormick and Company, Consumer Affairs Department, 211 Schilling Circle, Hunt Valley, MD 21031, 1-800-632-5847 (board game that takes players around the world collecting cargoes, dodging pitfalls and delivering the precious spices to the right destination, \$17).

Pillsbury, Richard (1996) Atlas of American Agriculture: The American Cornucopia. Macmillan

Related Internet Websites

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Information about global supply and demand, trade trends, and emerging market opportunities. <http://www.fas.usda.gov>

Food Safety and Inspection Service. Governmental service responsible for ensuring that meat and poultry imported into the US are produced under standards equivalent to those of the US for safety, wholesomeness and labeling accuracy. <http://www.usda.gov/agency/fsis/xborder.htm>

GLOBE. Program brings together students, teachers, and scientists from around the world to study the environment. Students perform environmental observations, such as air temperature and precipitation and share their data via the Internet. <http://www.globe.gov>

EVALUATION

An answer sheet has been provided.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This lesson adapted from Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom, Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and 4-H Youth Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

At Your Fingertips

A

import—Products brought into one country from another country for trade or sale.
export—Products sent to foreign countries for trade or sale.

In the spaces provided, write whether the products mentioned in the following statements are imports or exports. Use colored pencils, a world map and Student Worksheet B to complete the instructions in each statement. Read and follow the directions carefully.

1. A garden center in Tennessee orders tulip bulbs from Amsterdam in The Netherlands. Draw a red arrow from Holland to Tennessee. _____
2. Coffee is served at a cafe in New York. The coffee beans were grown in Columbia. Draw a black arrow from Columbia, South America, to New York. _____
3. A home-based sweater business in Arizona orders the finest merino wool from Australia. Draw a yellow arrow from Australia to Arizona. _____
4. Olive oil from Spain is a new item featured in a grocery store in Oklahoma. Draw a green arrow from Spain to Oklahoma. _____
5. Green tea is served during a business meeting in Oregon. Draw a brown arrow from China to Oregon. _____
6. Cotton from Egypt can be found in a fabric store in Wisconsin. Draw a pink arrow from Egypt to Wisconsin.

7. Bison meat is exported to England, to be served in restaurants. Draw an orange arrow from Wyoming to England. _____

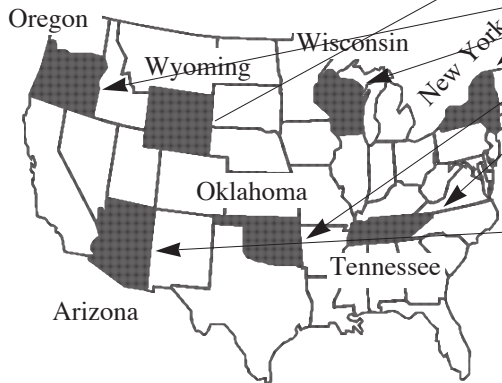


Name _____

At Your Fingertips (answers)

B

Identify the states that are blacked out on the US map below.



Adapted from Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom.

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